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2 NORTH VALLEY MEN PLEAD TO NATIONWIDE DRUG CONSPIRACY

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that PHILIP BRIZAN, 41, of Atwater, and JUDE BRIZAN, 42, of Modesto, entered guilty pleas today in connection with a major cocaine distribution operation based in the Central Valley of California.

Their guilty pleas resulted from a long-term Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement (BNE), and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), with the assistance of numerous state and local law enforcement agencies. During the investigation, agents seized approximately 38 kilograms, or about 77 pounds, of cocaine and nearly \$1.5 million in U.S. currency.

According to court documents, SERGIO REYNOL PADILLA, aka Sergio Reynol Padilla-Gonzalez, 39, of Merced, PHILIP BRIZAN, and WAYNE BRIZAN, aka Cornelius JAMES, aka Mark BRIZAN, aka Anthony WILKINS, 37, of Davie, Florida, headed a nationwide drug distribution conspiracy. For at least six years, PADILLA, a convicted drug felon and cocaine wholesaler, directed the shipment and distribution of large quantities of cocaine throughout the United States. Brothers WAYNE, PHILIP, and JUDE BRIZAN, who are originally from Grenada, were responsible for coordinating and transporting large amounts of cocaine obtained from PADILLA to the East Coast, primarily the Philadelphia area where the cocaine was distributed to violent gang members. The brothers shipped the cocaine in semi-tractor trailers containing partially legitimate loads of agricultural produce.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, PHILIP and JUDE BRIZAN face a mandatory minimum prison term of ten years and a maximum term of life, along with a maximum fine of \$4 million, for the drug conspiracy charge to which they pled guilty. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors. They are scheduled for sentencing before United States District Judge Anthony W. Ishii in Fresno on Monday, April 23, 2007. WAYNE BRIZAN is scheduled to enter a guilty plea to the drug conspiracy on February 20. Charges are still pending against SERGIO PADILLA and the remaining eight defendants -- MONICA PADILLA, 29, LORENA PEREZ, 37, GERARDO VARGAS GALICIA, 37,

GILBERT FRANKLIN, 32, all of Merced, TRINIDAD ANGULO, 39, of Madera,
FRANCESKA BRIZAN, 37, of Atwater, DAMON GUNN, 31, of Turlock, and HOWARD
GORDON, JR., 30, of Los Angeles, California.